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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 OTTAWA 000147

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STATE FOR INL AND WHA/CAN

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SUBJECT: CANADA KEEN TO COOPERATE ON COUNTERNARCOTICS AND
JUSTICE REFORM IN AFGHANISTAN

Classified By: PolMinCouns Scott Bellard, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

(1) (C) Summary: U.S. Coordinator for Counternarcotics and Justice Reform in Afghanistan Thomas A. Schweich discussed counternarcotics and the rule of law in Afghanistan with senior Canadian officials in Ottawa on January 17. Ambassador Schweich briefed progress on the 2007 U.S. Counternarcotics Strategy for Afghanistan. The Canadians reviewed their programming in Afghanistan, which focuses on law enforcement, corrections, and judicial capacity-building, as well as precursor targeting and interdiction, and regional cooperation. The Canadians agreed to tell the Afghans that NATO allies are in lockstep on CN strategy for Afghanistan. Canada is keen to collaborate with the U.S. in these areas bilaterally and multilaterally. End summary.

12. (C) U.S. Coordinator Schweich and Canadian Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM) of Foreign Affairs for Afghanistan Yves Brodeur met on January 17 to discuss progress on bilateral and multilateral counternarcotics (CN) and rule of law (ROL) efforts in Afghanistan. Ambassador Schweich briefed Brodeur on progress made to date with the new U.S. Counternarcotics Strategy for Afghanistan, with its emphasis on word-of-mouth public education, alternative development, ground eradication, interdiction, and network-centric prosecutions. He congratulated Canada for its progress on CN and ROL in Kandahar, and urged the Canadians to support the Good Performers Initiative (GPI).

13. (C) ADM Brodeur thanked Ambassador Schweich for the close U.S. cooperation in Afghanistan, and stressed that Canada had focused heavily on CN and was keen further to deepen its collaboration with the U.S. This collaboration should include our dealings with Pakistan, and efforts to stem the flow of opposition militants and materiel from that unstable country, he said. Brodeur stressed that Canada had "no disagreement" with the points raised by Ambassador Schweich, and agreed that it was time for Afghanistan to take ownership of the CN issue. He nonetheless underscored that NATO-ISAF allies and partners should make sure their programs and information campaigns are "in synch." Assistant Secretary to Cabinet Jill Sinclair separately stressed this same point.

Counternarcotics

14. (C) At an interagency roundtable, Afghanistan Task Force (FTAG) Director General Kerry Buck noted that Afghan President Karzai and others were using the debate over CN in an "unhelpful" way, and suggested that Regional Command - South (RC-S) countries work together to fix the mis-perception that there are differences among allies on CN for bad actors to exploit. She commented that Canada understands Ambassador Schweich's points that poppy correlates with insecurity and that security and CN programs -- including eradication -- could not be "sequenced" one after the other. The difference between the relatively peaceful and poppy-free north and the unstable, poppy-ridden south makes the need to face the poppy problem all the more immediate, she added. Canada is keen to coordinate its CN strategy, she observed, in the areas of law enforcement training, precursors, judicial reform, and alternative livelihoods (much of which Canada funds via the UN), as follow:

- on law enforcement training, Canada authorities believe it is necessary to train all Afghan National Police (ANP) in CN, which would increase the effectiveness and reach of CN units to the provinces;

- on precursor controls, Canada is funding a UN project in the border areas, and has deployed Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) officers to the Afghan-Pakistan border, as well as land ports, to increase bilateral coordination and effectiveness;

- on CN-related judicial reform, Canada is working to build and enhance justice and prosecution skills at the provincial level, and seeks to "buttress" the ability of provincial

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authorities to fight drugs and corruption; and,

- on alternative livelihoods, Canada's aid agency, CIDA, has been slow to develop an effective program, but hopes to have one in place by the 2008 planting season.

15. (C) FTAG Deputy Director Richard Arbeiter noted that roadway and other infrastructure development such as cold storage projects, along with the potential opening of the Kandahar airport to civil aviation, would help to get legitimate crops to Pakistan, Dubai, and other more affluent markets in the region. On the GPI, Arbeiter queried what administrative structure would be in place to counter corruption. Ambassador Schweich gave an overview of the grant program, and agreed to convey details about financial controls to the Canadians. Meanwhile, FTAG Senior Adviser David Fairchild noted that the sequencing around access to seeds and fertilizers for alternative livelihoods projects had been a problem that undermined allied efforts to decrease poppy production.

Kandahar and its Governor

16. (C) Ambassador Schweich noted that when he had visited Ottawa in July 2007, the Canadians had been critical of the Governor of Kandahar, to the point that they were looking at work-arounds to avoid cooperating with, and thus bolstering the authority of, the Governor. DG Buck told Ambassador Schweich, however, that Canada had now "made its peace" with the fact that "he's the guy we have, so he's they guy we have to work with" particularly when -- for whatever reason -- his interest in reducing poppy production tracked with Canada's and the central Afghan government's interests in Afghanistan.

Rule of Law and Prisons

17. (C) DG Buck noted that, in part due to domestic political

issues surrounding transferring battlefield detainees to the Afghans, Canadians had a particular focus on corrections issues. Canada had deployed corrections advisers to UNAMA, and others to work bilaterally with Afghan prison officials. The main lesson learned in this area, she said, was that Canada and its partners needed to "mesh" the training development of police, courts, and corrections simultaneously in order to be effective. Canada wants these ROL programs to be part of the Focused District Development (FDD) program, she stressed, because they are key to creating the perception of fairness in Afghan society under central government control.

¶18. (C) Canadian officials also pointed to the need for the FDD to include security for justices, particularly in places like Zhari and Panjway. ISAF partners face the same problems to various degrees throughout Afghanistan, Buck noted, and need to develop common approaches to addressing these common challenges. Canada would emphasize this issue in its dealings with RC-S partners and the rest of ISAF in the coming months, she promised, but emphasized that Canada is particularly keen to deepen collaboration with the U.S. Canada's incoming Kandahar PRT commander and the next Canadian RC-S POLAD both echoed this point in their QCanadian RC-S POLAD both echoed this point in their conversations with Ambassador Schweich.

Afghan Ambassador: Concerns, Ideas

¶19. (C) In a private meeting on the margins of a public affairs event (below), Afghan Ambassador to Canada Omar Samad expressed concern about what he described as an "erosion of trust" among Afghans whose high expectations for progress and good governance were not fulfilled by the Afghan government. He attributed this erosion, in part, to the lack of indigenous capacity for governance in Afghanistan, and argued that the country's friends should help it by encouraging skilled Afghan Diaspora to return. It might be better, he

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said, to take some of the money paid to "expensive international consultants" and use it instead to entice capable Afghans to do their part for Afghanistan. Samad also expressed concern about the "Talibanization of thought" among many Afghans, and argued for a project to train a cadre of moderate Afghan imams in Afghanistan.

Public Affairs Bonus

¶10. (C) Ambassador Schweich's presentation of the U.S. CN/ROL strategy to the prestigious Conference of Defense Associations Institute provoked a lively, informed discussion among some of Canada's most knowledgeable and influential opinion leaders on Afghanistan. The over-subscribed event permitted Ambassador Schweich to speak directly to subject matter experts to whom Canadian media turn for information and opinion regarding Canada's role in Afghanistan.

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